

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Wilmington VA Medical Center

Wilmington VA Medical Center

Virtual Veteran Town Hall

December 17, 2020

Agenda

- COVID-19 Updates
- Facility Visitation Policy
- COVID-19 Vaccine and FAQs
- Prescription Refills
- Care in the Community Resources
- VA Video Connect/Virtual Care
- Copay Deferment Recollection
- Construction Updates/Facility Expansion
- Do Not Delay Essential Mental Health Care
- Open Forum/Questions

COVID-19 Updates

Vince Kane

Director, Wilmington VA Medical Center



Delaware COVID-19 Numbers as of 12/17

Cases

47,929

+787

Deaths

833

+7

Location

Cases↓

Deaths

New Castle County

27,602

411

+507

+2

Sussex County

12,780

276

+129

+3

Kent County

7,442

146

+140

+2

1,500

1,000

500

0

May 18

Jul 8

Aug 28

Oct 18

Dec 8

787

December 16

14 days

Total cases

Delaware

United States

Dec 3-16

Total cases **11,231**

Deaths **54**

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

New Jersey COVID-19 Numbers as of 12/17

Total Cases:

- Atlantic 10,038
- Burlington 17,675
- Camden 24,597
- Cape May 2,056
- Cumberland 6,459
- Gloucester 11,906
- Salem 2,285
- **7 County total: 75,016**



Do Not Delay Essential Care

Schedule Your Appointments Now

- Our main Medical Center and five Community Based Outpatient Clinics continue to be open, safe and ready for your care.
- Please call ahead to notify us of your health care needs at **1-800-461-8262, select Option 2.**
- During this time, we want to discourage “walks-ins” and prefer that all care be scheduled.
- ***Please schedule all your appointments including blood work and x-rays prior to coming to any of our facilities.***
- We will do our best to consolidate all of your care into one visit.

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Facility Visitation Policy

To ensure the health and safety of our Veterans, staff and visitors, we're currently following CDC guidelines and limiting visitors for patients receiving care at one of our facilities. Limiting outside visitors helps us protect older Veterans and those who already have health issues.

No one under 18 years of age is permitted at this time.

If you want or need a family member or friend to be a part of a scheduled health care visit, please let us know ahead of time so we can safely prepare for their participation. We do make an exception for Veterans who qualify as an end-of-life "compassionate case."

COVID-19 SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

WEAR A MASK
IT IS A
REQUIREMENT
IN OUR FACILITY



Make sure the mask covers your mouth and nose.

**PHYSICAL
DISTANCE OF
6 FEET**



Make sure you keep a physical distance of 6 feet when possible.

**KEEP
HANDS
CLEAN**



Use hand sanitizer or soap and water.

**TELL US
ABOUT ANY
SYMPTOMS**



Let medical staff know right away if you have fever, cough or other cold symptoms.

COVID-19 Vaccine Planning and Distribution

Robert Measley, MD

Chief of Medicine and Infectious Diseases

Victoria Ebanks, DNP MSN RN CNOR

Associate Chief Nurse Perioperative Services and Acute Care

Loan Vu, PharmD

Chief of Pharmacy

COVID-19 Vaccine Planning and Distribution

- Wilmington VA Medical Center is expected to **receive initial doses of the vaccine around Christmas.**
- We will begin vaccines with our frontline health care workers (emergency department, inpatient, and other support staff) and residents in our Community Living Center.
- From there, we will be following CDC and VA guidelines for vaccinations moving to higher risk populations, such as age comorbidities, etc.
- We will be communicating updates around our plan at Wilmington VA Medical Center through direct outreach, social media and website updates.

Why do I need a COVID-19 vaccine?

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has caused severe illness and death around the world. This is, in part, because the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads easily from person to person.

We have some treatments to help reduce the effects of COVID-19, but a vaccine that helps prevent people from becoming infected is the best way to slow or stop the spread of the virus.

COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ: www.va.gov/covid-19-vaccine

How do vaccines for viruses like the coronavirus protect me from getting sick?

Vaccines help train your body's natural immune system to recognize and fight a specific disease by stimulating a response to the virus that causes that disease.

When a virus is introduced to your body for the first time, your immune system mounts a defense. This includes making antibodies that help kill or neutralize the virus. If you're exposed to the same virus again, these antibodies also help your immune system recognize and fight the virus quickly.

COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ: www.va.gov/covid-19-vaccine



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COVID-19 Vaccine Overview

- VA is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop a phased plan to maximize the benefit of COVID-19 vaccine once authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- There will be limited vaccine available initially until production increases.
- As more vaccine becomes available, VA's goal is to offer a COVID-19 vaccine to all health care workers and Veterans who choose to be vaccinated.
- Even after getting a COVID-19 vaccine, source control (masks and face coverings), personal protective equipment (PPE) and physical distancing will still be needed.

COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ: www.va.gov/covid-19-vaccine

COVID-19 Vaccine Planning BLUF

Vaccine authorization by FDA may be as soon as late Dec. 17.

VA will be ready to rapidly deploy vaccine when approved.

Highest risk groups will be offered vaccine first, based on criteria from the National Academies of Science Engineering and Medicine, who are advising CDC:

- Risk of acquiring infection
- Risk of transmitting disease
- Risk of severe illness and death
- Risk of harm to society (if essential workers, including health care personnel, are unable to work)

COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ: www.va.gov/covid-19-vaccine

COVID-19 Vaccine Phased Roll-Out

VA will offer the COVID-19 vaccine to highest-risk health care personnel (HCP) first. Here's why:

COVID-19 Vaccine



HCP



High-Risk Veterans



Decreases transmission to Veterans and other employees



Helps keep VA health care functioning



Promotes a stronger, healthier workforce



Provided as vaccine becomes available



Offered by risk level:



Older Veterans first
then those with several
high-risk factors



More than 50% of
Veterans are age 65+

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COVID-19 Vaccine What is VA Doing to Prepare

Conducting planning exercises to address how to

- Coordinate ordering, storage, handling of vaccine
- Offer vaccine to highest-risk groups based on number of doses available
- Release targeted communications & outreach/scheduling to high-risk groups
- Administer vaccine

Informing and engaging Veterans in vaccine planning by

- Conducting listening sessions and interviews to understand Veteran interest and best ways to reach different demographic groups (e.g., race, ethnicity, age) regarding a vaccine

Ensuring safety by

- Tracking and monitoring adverse reactions to ensure safety and promote continued safe use as with existing vaccines

COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ: www.va.gov/covid-19-vaccine



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COVID-19 Vaccine Resources

- **VA COVID-19 Vaccine Page**: This is a public-facing page that answers questions about VA's vaccine plan. (www.va.gov/covid-19-vaccine)
- **Keep Me Informed Tool**: On the Vaccine page, Veterans can sign up for alerts and indicate whether or not they'd be interested in the vaccine. This data will be passed to medical centers. (www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/stay-informed)
- **VA Vaccine Hotline**: Veterans can call with questions about the vaccine or anything COVID related. The number is **1-800-myVA411** or **(1-800-698-2411)**. Veterans are asked to press 8 for COVID information. There are also other prompts including symptoms, exposure, testing, quarantine, prevention, travel, appointments, general information, and a prompt to speak to a live representative.

Prescription Drug Refills

Loan Vu, PharmD
Chief of Pharmacy



Prescription Drug Refills from Your Home

www.wilmington.va.gov/docs/Rx-Refill-Options-Flyer.pdf

Our Pharmacy Service is dedicated to provide you with the **best care** in the **safest possible way** during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To reduce the time spent in the facility and to further lower COVID-19 transmission risk to all Veterans and VA staff, we ask that you only come to the pharmacy if you need a medication the same day.

Otherwise, please use the mail out option for all routine and refill requests.

Prescription Drug Refills from Your Home

www.wilmington.va.gov/docs/Rx-Refill-Options-Flyer.pdf

4 Ways to Refill Your VA Prescriptions from Home

1. Phone

Automated Refill Line:

- 302-633-5484

Pharmacy Services Call Center:

- 1-800-461-8262 ext. 5359

2. Online

You can use My HealtheVet at www.myhealthevet.va.gov to refill your VA prescriptions and view your VA prescription history online.

3. Mail

Send your refill slips to:

Wilmington VA Medical Center
Attn: Pharmacy (119)
1601 Kirkwood Hwy
Wilmington, DE 19805

4. New Mobile App

Visit mobile.va.gov/app/rx-refill or scan the QR code below with your device's camera to learn more and to download the app.



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Information on Mail-Order Prescriptions

There have been reports of delays in Veterans receiving their mail-order prescription drugs due to delays in U.S. Postal Service (USPS) deliveries. The VA Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy is proactively attempting to offset any possible USPS delivery delays by pulling medications 15 days prior to the original refill due date indicated on the prescription label.

If you use our mail-order prescription services and have not received your medication within 7 – 10 business days of the date indicated on your mail-order prescription, please contact the Wilmington VA Medical Center Pharmacy Call Center at **302-994-2511 ext. 5359** or reach out to our Pharmacy Service via Secure Messaging on **MyHealtheVet**. Our Pharmacy Service will then be able to investigate the matter and assist you with your medication needs.

We appreciate your understanding, and we are doing everything within our power to ensure any Veteran who receives his or her VA prescription medication through the mail receives it on time.

Care in the Community

Sandra Cahall

Staff Nurse

Chasity Gary

Social Worker

Care in the Community Resources

www.wilmington.va.gov/docs/WVAMC-Community-Care-Resources.pdf

With the passing of the MISSION Act in 2019, the VA greatly expanded Veterans' access to health care by allowing them to receive care in community health facilities when certain eligibility requirements are met.

To avoid confusion and possible delays in claims processing, the Wilmington VA Medical Center Community Care team put together some resources to assist you should you have questions about how to take advantage of these benefits and contact information to assist you in addressing any issues

Resources:

- [1. www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/General_Care.asp](http://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/General_Care.asp); [2. https://missionact.va.gov/](https://missionact.va.gov/); [3. VA Health Care Options for Veterans booklet](#); [4. Enhanced VA Options under the MISSION Act](#); [5. All MISSION Act Fact Sheets related to Community Care](#)

Eligibility

www.wilmington.va.gov/docs/WVAMC-Community-Care-Resources.pdf

1. Eligibility ▶

VA confirms a Veteran's eligibility to receive community care.

2. Appointments ▶

Veteran or a VA staff member schedules appointment with a provider in VA's network.

3. Getting Care ▶

Veteran receives care from a community provider in the VA's network.

4. Billing

Community provider sends the claim to a Third Party Administrator (TPA) or VA for payment.

A Veteran's eligibility for community care depends on his/her individual health care needs or circumstances. Please note the following about eligibility for community care:

- Veterans **must receive approval** from VA prior to obtaining care from a community provider, in most circumstances.
- Learn more about eligibility at

www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/General_Care.asp

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Urgent Care

www.wilmington.va.gov/docs/WVAMC-Community-Care-Resources.pdf

- VA offers urgent care services to eligible Veterans at VA medical facilities or at in-network urgent care clinics closer to home.
- Use VA's urgent care benefit to treat minor injuries and illnesses that are not life-threatening, such as:
 - colds, strep throat, sprained muscles and skin and ear infections
- Learn more about urgent care at www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/Urgent_Care.asp



72-Hour Community Care Inpatient and Emergency Room Notification

www.wilmington.va.gov/docs/WVAMC-Community-Care-Resources.pdf

- The notification processes for emergency and inpatient care in the community changed as of June 8, 2020.
- All notifications of Veterans seeking emergency/inpatient care in the community will be reported to a centralized call center.
- Failure to report in a timely manner may impact a Veteran's eligibility for VA to cover the cost of treatment.

1-844-72HRVHA (1-844-724-7842)

- Resources
 - www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/info_EmergencyCare.asp
 - www.wilmington.va.gov/docs/72hr-notice-comm-IP-ER-care.pdf

Billing Issues Related to Community Care

www.wilmington.va.gov/docs/WVAMC-Community-Care-Resources.pdf

VA's Community Care Contact Center can assist Veterans with resolving adverse credit reporting or debt collection actions resulting from authorized VA community care claims. Specially trained call center staff work one-on-one with Veterans to research and resolve collection-specific issues.

Veterans should gather any letters, notices or information regarding debt collection or adverse credit reports related to authorized use of VA community care and call the toll-free number listed below between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. EST.

1-844-881-7618, Option 1

www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/General_Care.asp

Contacting the Wilmington Community Care Team

For all other Community Care-related questions, please call Wilmington VA Medical Center's dedicated Community Care line below between 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Please leave a message if calling Community Care after hours.

302-633-5353

www.wilmington.va.gov/docs/WVAMC-Community-Care-Resources.pdf

Wilmington Veterans Affairs Medical Center Community Care Resources

With the passing of the MISSION Act in 2019, the VA greatly expanded Veterans' access to health care by allowing them to receive care in community health facilities when certain eligibility requirements are met.

To avoid confusion and possible delays in claims processing, the Wilmington VA Medical Center Community Care team put together some resources to assist you should you have questions about how to take advantage of these benefits and contact information to assist you in addressing any issues. The below information can also be found at www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE.

Eligibility

A Veteran's eligibility for community care depends on his/her individual health care needs or circumstances. Veterans **must receive approval** from VA prior to obtaining care from a community provider, in most circumstances.

Learn more about eligibility at www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/General_Care.asp.

Urgent Care

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Learn more about urgent care at www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/Urgent_Care.asp.

72-Hour Community Care Inpatient and Emergency Room Notification Hotline

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Contacting the Wilmington VA Medical Center Community Care Team

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302-633-5353

Learn More About Community Care

For a complete overview of receiving care in the community visit www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE.



VA Video Connect / Virtual Care

Michael Selby

Connected Care Coordinator/Nurse Manager



VA Video Connect / Virtual Care

Real-Time Access to Your VA Care Team Through VA Video Connect

VA Video Connect makes VA health care more convenient for you and other Veterans and Caregivers.

VA Video Connect enables you to quickly and easily meet with your VA care team through secure and private videoconferencing sessions.

You can visit with your provider in a virtual medical room, from anywhere, using the camera on your phone, computer, or tablet.

<https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect>



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VA Video Connect / Virtual Care

Real-Time Access to Your VA Care Team Through VA Video Connect

REAL-TIME ACCESS TO YOUR VA CARE TEAM THROUGH VA VIDEO CONNECT

- **Need Help?** VA can help you get set up or troubleshoot technical problems. Call the Office of Connected Care Help Desk at 866-651-3180.
- **Test your device.** Visit the [VA Video Connect test site](#) to test your microphone and speakers. You can also ask your VA care team for a practice session.
- <https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect> contains informational videos on:
 - [VA Video Connect Instructions for Patients](#)
 - [VA Video Connect Demonstration](#)
 - [VA Video Connect Troubleshooting Tips](#)

Tele Urgent Care

Veterans are now able to participate in a secure video or phone appointment with a VA tele urgent care provider.

A registered nurse will give you advice and guide your care for prompt service if tele urgent care is right for you.

1-833-TELE-URGENT
(1-833-835-3874)

Or dial the main number of your local VISN 4 VA medical center and press option #3

Available to Veterans receiving care at VA medical centers in VISN 4 including Altoona, Butler, Coatesville, Erie, Lebanon, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Wilkes-Barre and Wilmington.

 Learn more at www.visn4.va.gov/tele-urgent

Tele Urgent Care may be an option if:

- You live far from your VA facility.
- You have health conditions that make traveling to the VA difficult.
- You lack time to attend in-person appointments.
- You don't require a hands-on physical examination.

Tele Urgent Care uses the VA Video Connect app. To learn more and test your device, visit mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect.



 **Save time!**

No need to travel to a VA facility!

 **Save money!**

No co-pay needed!



Copay Deferment Recollection

Lisa Williams

Consolidated Patient Account Center



Copay Deferment Recollection

VHA to resume mailing patient statements in January 2021

Due to COVID-19, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced in April 2020 that the agency was suspending collection actions and extending the terms of current repayment agreements until December 31, 2020.

In addition, VA stopped printing and mailing monthly patient statements for medical care and prescriptions as of April 6, 2020. Printing and mailing of monthly patient statements is expected to resume in January 2021.

Veterans can visit this website for additional information:

www.va.gov/health-care/pay-copay-bill/financial-hardship/



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Copay Deferment Recollection

VHA to resume mailing patient statements in January 2021

- April 2020:
 - VA [suspended mailing of patient statements](#) due to concern for financial well-being
 - VA [suspended collection actions](#) and extended terms of current repayment agreements until December 31, 2020
- November 2020: All Veterans with balances received an information-only letter (not a statement or call for payment), informing them of:
 - Current amount owed
 - Methods of payment if they choose to pay
 - Debt relief options available
- November 2020: VA began calling Veterans w/debt >\$2,000
- January 2021: Patient statements resume, with information on debt relief options
- VHA has continued to keep Veterans informed of the suspension of patient statements through news releases, [blog posts](#), etc.

Copay Deferment Recollection

VHA to resume mailing patient statements in January 2021

- **What debt relief options are available to Veterans?**

Debt relief options are always available to Veterans. They include:

- Set up a repayment plan
- Request a waiver, write off or compromise of your debt
- Request a VA Hardship Determination.

www.va.gov/health-care/pay-copay-bill/financial-hardship/

Sample Information Letter

VA MONTANA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
PO BOX 1500
FORT HARRISON MT 59636-9999

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

QUESTIONS OR ADDRESS CHANGE?
Call 1-866-393-1846

11/23/2020

TESTFIRST W TESTLAST000000081814
1717 38TH AVE NE
HAVRE MT 59501-6513

VA would like to provide you with important information about your VA health care, community care, and prescription copays.

We know that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused financial hardship for some Veterans. That's why we put our monthly patient statements on hold starting on April 6, 2020. We'll begin sending patient statements again in January 2021, and we want to make sure you have the information you need to prepare.

Here's what you need to know for January

In January 2021, you will receive a patient statement that may include the total amount of any:

- New charges for medical care and prescriptions you received from April 6, 2020 through December 31, 2020.
- Unpaid charges for medical care and prescriptions you received before April 2020.

You don't have to make any payments until January 2021. But you can choose to make early payments before January if you'd like.

Your current balance is \$265.00 AS OF NOVEMBER 20, 2020.

Current amount owed

Method of payment

If you would like to make a payment at any time between now and January 2021

You can pay in any of the ways listed below. Please have your account number ready when making a payment.

- o Online: www.pay.gov
- o By mail:
Department of Veterans Affairs
PO Box 3978
Portland, OR 97208-3978
- o In person: At a VA medical center agent cashier's office
- o By phone: 888-827-4817

If you can't make your payments when billing starts again:

Please contact VA at 866-400-1238 or 844-698-2311. We can work with you to determine your debt relief options. These may include:

- Establishing a repayment plan
- Requesting a waiver, write off or compromise of your debt
- Requesting a VA Hardship Determination

For more information:

- Visit <https://www.va.gov/health-care/pay-copay-bill/financial-hardship/>
- Or contact your nearest VA health care facility's business office. Find a VA location at <https://www.va.gov/find-locations>.

Debt relief options

Facility Construction and Expansion Updates

Parking Garage

- Building brand new, four-story, 370-spot parking garage on our main campus.
- Anticipated completion date of mid-2021.
- Please allow some extra time (15 minutes) when visiting the hospital for an appointment.



Facility Construction and Expansion Updates

Kent County CBOC

The current Kent County CBOC, located at 1198 South Governors Avenue in Dover, Delaware, will be relocated to the former Blue Hen Mall at 655 South Bay Road in Dover.

This move will increase the clinic space from its current size of 9,000 square feet to over 29,000 square feet.

The additional space will allow for the expansion of services such as primary care, behavioral health, specialty services, and telehealth.

Anticipated opening late January 2021.

www.wboc.com/story/42899986/new-veterans-affairs-outpatient-clinic-coming-to-dover



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Facility Construction and Expansion Updates Cape May County CBOC

On Dec. 8, the Cape May County CBOC relocated from its current location on the Cape May Coast Guard Station to a portion of the Rio Grande Mall in Rio Grande.

This move allowed for expansion into an 11,000 sq. foot clinic offering primary care, behavioral health, specialty care, and telehealth.

In order to ensure the health and safety of our Veterans and staff during COVID-19, please contact your care team at the number above before any unscheduled visit to the clinic.

www.capemaycountyherald.com/news/government/article_01fd510a-34bb-11eb-abda-7751d2296e5f.html



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
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Facility Construction and Expansion Updates Atlantic County CBOC

Finalizing bid selection for new Atlantic County CBOC.
VA contracting finalizing selection process.
No estimate on completion date.

Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System (BTSSS)



As of Nov. 2, Wilmington VA Medical Center will use the new Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System (BTSSS) to reimburse eligible Veterans and beneficiaries for travel to and from VA medical appointments.

The new system will allow users to submit and track transportation reimbursement claims using a secure web-based portal on the [Access VA](https://access.va.gov), available 24/7, 365 days a year.

- Reduces the need for completing hard copy claim submissions in-person, replacing and eliminating the previous kiosk method.
- Provides an easy-to-use web-based app to enter claim over the internet via [AccessVA](https://access.va.gov).
- Ensures timely processing and payment of travel reimbursements and reduces manual intervention and improper claim payments through automated features
- Authenticates the Veteran or Beneficiary by: 1.) VA PIV card; or 2.) A DS Logon Level 2 account.
- <https://access.va.gov/accessva/>
- <https://www.va.gov/health-care/get-reimbursed-for-travel-pay/>

Do Not Delay Essential Mental Health Care

Reach Out

- Veterans in crisis should connect with the Veterans Crisis Line 24/7 to reach caring, qualified responders by calling **1-800-273-8255**, then pressing **1**, or by texting **838255**.
- Veterans and their families also can find resources at www.veteranscrisisline.net.
- Veterans enrolled in VA health care at the Wilmington VA Medical Center can call **1-800-461-8262** (Option **2**) or use MyHealthVet at www.myhealth.va.gov to schedule an in-person or virtual appointment.





Wilmington VA Medical Center Veteran Outreach Team

The mission of the Wilmington VA Medical Center Outreach Team is to provide our Delaware and southern New Jersey Veterans with information regarding all VA health care services they may be entitled to. Team members assist Veterans in the enrollment process for VA health care.

They attend community events in southern NJ and Delaware in order to educate Veterans and their families on VA health care benefits, provide resources and answer questions.

If you have an upcoming event in Delaware or southern New Jersey and would like our Outreach Team to attend, please contact our team at VHAWIMOutreachTeam@va.gov.

Follow us on social media and sign up for our email list to get the most up-to-date information.

- www.wilmington.va.gov
- If you would like to receive News and Announcements and Emergency Alerts from Wilmington VA Medical Center, please subscribe to our [email list](#) .
- Follow @WilmingtonVAMC on
 -  [Facebook](#)
 -  [Twitter](#)
 -  [Instagram](#)
- **Calendar of Events:** www.wilmington.va.gov/calendar.asp